



**National Transportation Safety Board
Strategic Plan
2006-2010**

Message From The Chairman

I am pleased to present the strategic plan for the National Transportation Safety Board for fiscal years 2006-2010. This strategic plan will guide the Agency's work for the next five years and will shape the way we plan, budget, and account for our work. The plan focuses on four main issues; accident investigation, advocacy and outreach, workforce development and resource management.

The Agency is entering a period of declining resources for which planning becomes an even more important exercise as does the more efficient utilization of those declining resources. Our transportation systems are becoming more technologically complex and the Board must be prepared to meet that challenge. We must anticipate problems and adapt accordingly. We must look beyond the present and prepare for emerging problems and more importantly, seize the opportunities. We must set priorities and communicate them with our staff and stakeholders.

We should be proud of our past work and safety accomplishments, but there is more and increasing work to be done and we must focus on our mission. I believe that the blueprint the strategic plan provides will assist us in meeting challenges while maintaining the quality of performance in accident investigation that the American public expects of our agency.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark V. Rosenker', is positioned above the printed name.

Mark V. Rosenker
Acting Chairman

Table of Contents

Message from the Chairman

About the National Transportation Safety Board

Mission

Approach

General Goals, Objectives and Key Factors

Evaluation

About the National Transportation Safety Board

The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent Federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and certain significant accidents in the other modes of transportation -- railroad, highway, marine and pipeline -- and issuing safety recommendations aimed at preventing future accidents. The Board derives its authority from Title 49 of the United States Code, Chapter 11. The rules of the Board are located in Chapter VIII, Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

The NTSB is responsible for maintaining the government's database of civil aviation accidents and also conducts special studies of transportation safety issues of national significance. The NTSB provides investigators to serve as U.S. Accredited Representatives as specified in international treaties for aviation accidents overseas involving U.S.-registered aircraft, or involving aircraft or major components of U.S. manufacture. The NTSB also serves as the "court of appeals" for any airman, mechanic or mariner whenever certificate action is taken by the Federal Aviation Administration or the U.S. Coast Guard Commandant, or when civil penalties are assessed by the FAA.

Since its inception in 1967, the NTSB has investigated more than 124,000 aviation accidents and over 10,000 surface transportation accidents. In so doing, it has become one of the world's premier accident investigation agencies. On call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, NTSB investigators travel throughout the country and to every corner of the world to investigate significant accidents and develop factual records and safety recommendations.

The NTSB has issued more than 12,000 recommendations in all transportation modes to more than 2,200 recipients. Since 1990, the NTSB has highlighted some issues on a Most Wanted list of safety improvements. Although the NTSB does not regulate transportation equipment, personnel or operations, and the NTSB does not initiate enforcement action, its reputation for impartiality and thoroughness has enabled the NTSB to achieve such success in shaping transportation safety improvements that more than 82 percent of its recommendations have been adopted by those in a position to effect change. Many safety features currently incorporated into airplanes, automobiles, trains, pipelines and marine vessels had their genesis in NTSB recommendations.

Mission

The mission of the NTSB is to identify and communicate the lessons learned from the careful, competent and independent investigation of transportation accidents in order to prevent loss of life, personal injury, property damage and harm to the environment. NTSB also performs other significant functions, including coordination of disaster assistance for victims and families of transportation accidents, as well as adjudication of airman and mariner appeals. All of our activities are aimed at helping to maintain America's transportation system as the safest in the world.

Approach

The NTSB will seek to accomplish its mission by careful use of the resources provided by Congress to create and maintain a motivated, knowledgeable workforce that is properly trained, equipped and supported; by intelligent selection of endeavor and masterful execution of function; through the cooperative and supportive contribution of private and public sector partners; through careful consideration and forceful communication of recommendations for change in the regulation and operation of the instrumentalities of transportation; and by the creation of a self-critical learning culture that strives for continued improvement in the services it provides.

General Goals, Objectives and Key Factors

In support of its mission, NTSB has set several general goals for the next five years.

Accident Investigation: NTSB will maintain its response capacity for investigation of accidents and increase its analysis of incidents and other abnormalities that have the potential to be of consequence, and concentrate its efforts on investigative activity that has the greatest prospect of improving public transportation safety.

The foregoing entails the following objectives:

1. Continuously assess the most robust and efficient approaches to accident investigation;
2. Enhance organizational capabilities and investment of investigative resources for incident recognition and analysis that will identify potential precursors to transportation accidents.

Key Factors include:

External: The NTSB has been mandated by Congress to investigate certain types of transportation accidents. The Agency must work within these parameters when making any changes to how and when accidents are investigated or must reevaluate why these parameters are in place and request any changes from Congress. In the post 9/11 environment, transportation safety and security are even more interconnected. Therefore, special attention must be focused on investigation protocols and coordination with other federal agencies so that information and evidence is handled in a manner that enables law enforcement agencies to pursue legal action if necessary.

Internal: The NTSB must expend resources to improve the technical capabilities of its investigative staff and facilities within the constraints of its authorization and appropriations and set priorities in light of declining resources.

Advocacy and Outreach: NTSB will enhance its presence in the transportation community through conspicuous leadership and technical advocacy of significant transportation safety issues; and promotion of the Board's safety recommendations.

The foregoing entails the following objectives:

3. Pursue a technical leadership role within the transportation community to advance the technical understanding and awareness of critical transportation safety issues, and reflect that leadership role in staff performance;
4. Develop and execute plans to advocate support for and adoption of safety recommendations; and
5. Review and analyze recommendation results to identify what works best.

Key Factors include:

External: The Agency must enlist the support of industry and other government agencies in its role as a proactive leader in bringing transportation safety issues to the attention of the transportation community.

Internal: The Agency must ensure that key staff maintain expertise to keep them at the top of their disciplines and provide opportunities for them to assert a leadership role with industry and other government agencies both domestic and international. Limited resources in both manpower and budget must also be a consideration.

Workforce Development: NTSB will seek to enhance the productivity and professional standing of its employees and their satisfaction with their workplace through careful and intensive recruiting, fair performance-based compensation, an emphasis on professional development, a compassionate approach to the demands of family and personal life, and a commitment to excellence in all aspects of endeavor.

The foregoing entails the following objectives:

6. Encourage, recognize and reward excellence in performance and establish a performance-based compensation plan that is aligned with the agency's strategic plan;
7. Recruit, train and retain an exceptional workforce dedicated to accomplishing the Board's mission;
8. Maintain a workplace that facilitates the performance and satisfaction of NTSB employees; and
9. Fully incorporate the Academy's potential for instructive communication, instruction and public advocacy into the mission of the Board.

Key Factors include:

External: Recent reductions in Board resources will limit the options that are available to provide performance compensation, education opportunities, and to fund recruitment and retention programs. The increasing complexity of transportation systems necessitates an increase in the skills and knowledge of the Board's employees.

Internal: The Agency must provide opportunities for employees to maintain and improve their skills in light of the constantly changing and complex nature of transportation systems. The technical specialization required of Board staff limits the Board's ability to be flexible and maintain staffing depth.

Resource Management: NTSB will continuously evaluate expenditures and fiscal commitments in order to efficiently manage assets dedicated to accomplishment of its mission.

The foregoing entails the following objectives:

10. Ensure management accountability by including budget execution as a parameter of performance for all levels of management;
11. Review the efficiency of all activities and expenditures.

Key Factors include:

External: The Agency has considerable pressure to accomplish its mission in a timely manner, with limited resources. Congress and the public expect the Board to investigate more accidents, in shorter time, with fewer resources.

Internal: The Agency must provide cost accounting tools and methods to the program offices so that they can more effectively manage resources. Board Members expect the Board to investigate more accidents, in shorter time, with fewer resources.

Evaluation

The National Transportation Safety Board's performance will be evaluated through regular program evaluations commissioned by the Office of Management, and supplemented by the Board's annual financial audit. Each program office has their own objectives linked to the Agency's goals and objectives. The program Office Director's performance will be based upon how well their office has met their own objectives and how well they have supported the Agency's goals and objectives.